

## Going Home

### Factors that Contribute to Permanency for Children in the Residential Setting

Erin Sutton

#### Abstract

Since the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) was introduced nearly seven years ago, there has been great concern about permanency for children who are in out-of-home care. The purpose of this study was to determine if there is a significant relationship between the variables of interest and permanency. This study focused on children who are in residential treatment facilities in Kentucky. This is a correlational study that uses secondary data analysis to examine information collected from the Kentucky Foster Care Census and information provided by the Children's Review Program database. Children placed in a rural area reach permanency at an expedited rate as compared to those in urban ones. There was no difference between ethnic groups, gender, or age groups in reaching permanency.



# Going Home: Factors that Contribute to Permanency for Children in the Residential Setting

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# Introduction

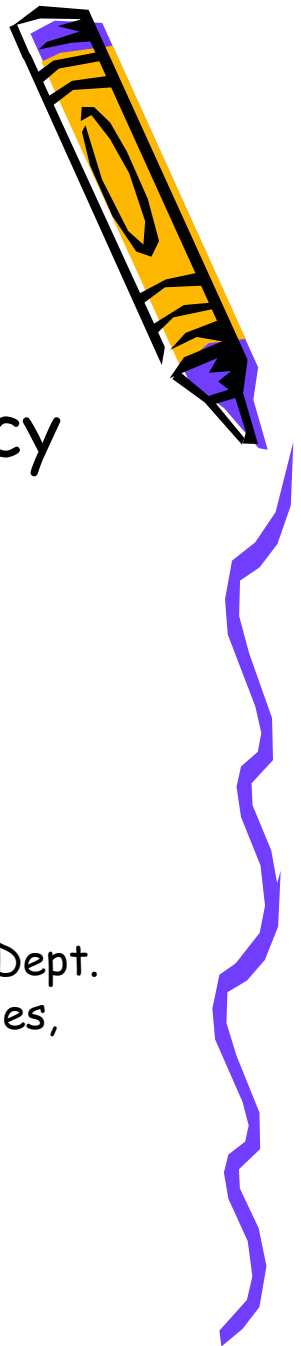


- Since the implementation of ASFA, there is great concern about permanency for children in out of home care
- Number of children reaching permanency slowly increasing (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families, 1998a)
- Most research focuses on permanency in foster care
- Factors studied in past are gender, age, and ethnicity (Courtney, 1994)



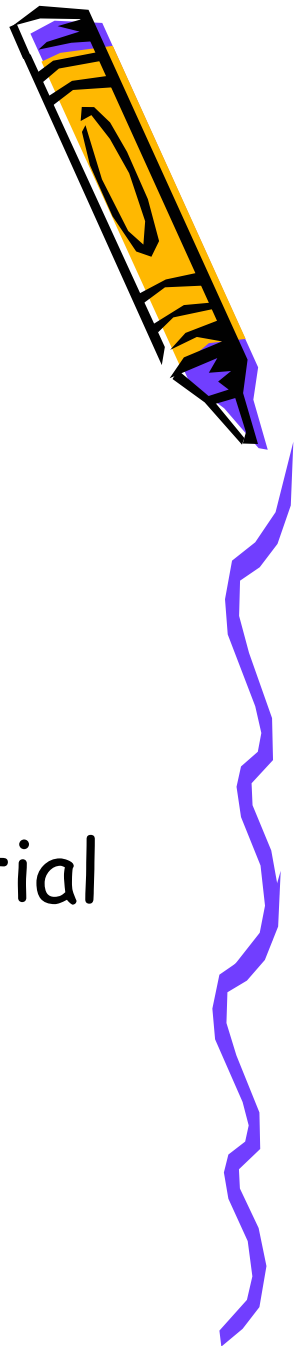
# Introduction

- Chances of children reaching permanency decreases over time (Kemp & Bodonyi, 2002)
- No racial differences in attaining permanency
- Older and minority children have more difficult time attaining permanency (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families, 1998b)



# Study Purpose

- To assess what factors affect permanency
- Focus on age, gender, ethnicity, urban/rural placement, and permanency of children in residential care in Kentucky



# Literature Review



- Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) was created to promote adoption efforts for children in foster care
- Establishes a timeline for termination of parental rights and establishes a permanency planning hearing
- Determines if a child will return to parent, placed for adoption, or if other permanent living arrangements are more appropriate



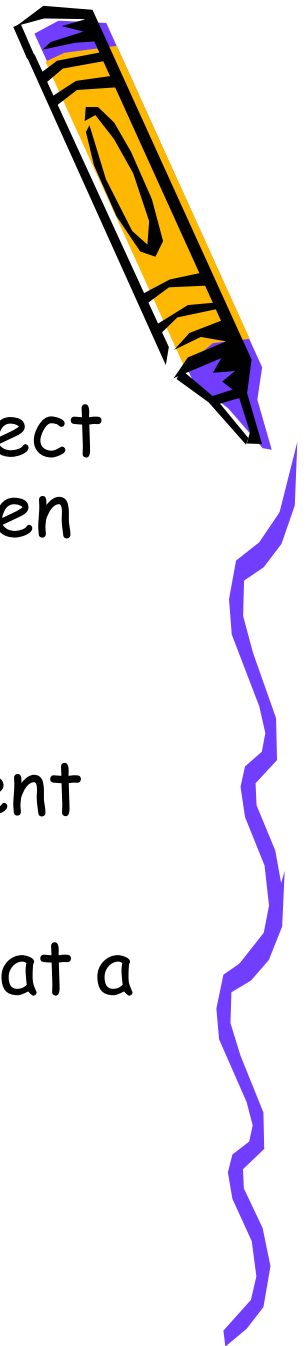
# Literature Review



- Since ASFA was implemented, adoption has increased 57% (CWLA, 2003)
- Focus and shift in literature on foster care and its benefits
- Important to shorten the amount of time a child spends in out of home care because of potential detrimental long term effects (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families, 1998b)
- Community partners can work together to improve social skills and mental health through concurrent planning



# Literature Review



- Kentucky Adoptions Opportunities Project (KAOP) created to help high risk children reach permanency
- Focused on one urban and rural area
- More social worker involvement and client compliance in urban areas
- Rural populations achieved permanency at a slower rate (Martin, Barbee, Antle, & Sar, 2002)





# Literature Gaps

- No focus on how location affects permanency
- Kentucky has conducted research on foster care through Kentucky Foster Care Census but has not yet analyzed residential data



# Research Questions



- Do gender, age, and ethnicity affect the attainment of permanency for children in residential care?
- Do state committed children under the age of 18 who are placed in a residential treatment facility in an urban area attain permanency at an expedited rate compared to those children who are placed in a rural area?



# Method

- Correlational study using secondary data analysis
- Used information from Kentucky Foster Care Census
  - Accounted for 5,890 children
  - Ran from August 2002 to November 2003
  - Given by Ruth Huebner and the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS)
- Also used information from Children's Review Program database to examine demographic information

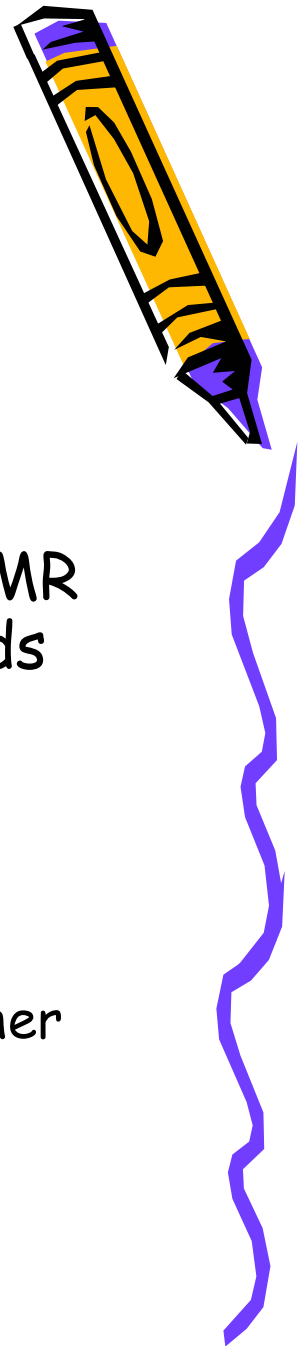


# Method

- Original  $n = 1,070$
- New  $n = 669$ 
  - Due to wrong placement, permanency tracking issues, unexpectedly leaving care
  - 401 children removed
- First point in time April 21, 2003
- Second point in time March 29, 2005



# Method

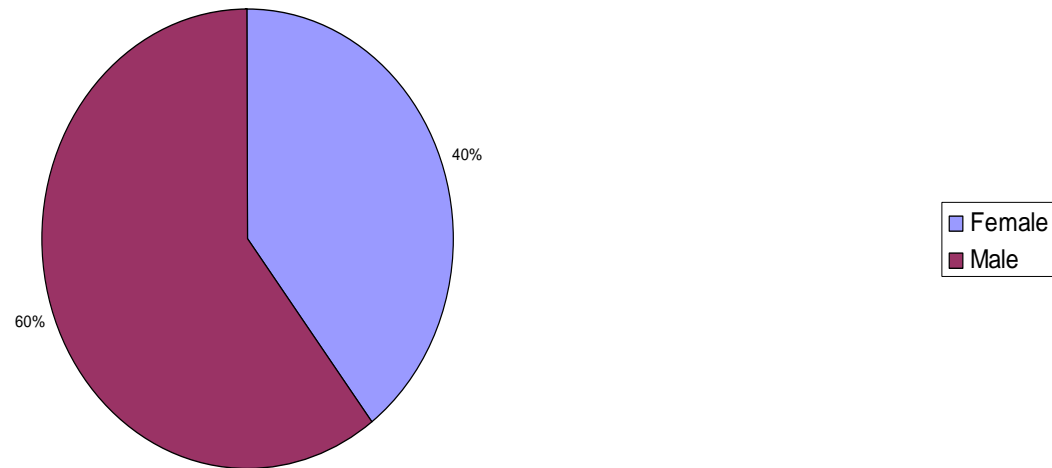


- Subjects were protected by sanitizing their identifying information before use
- Study was approved by CHFS, Bluegrass MH/MR Board, Inc., and UK Institutional Review Boards
- Independent Variables
  - child's permanency goal, county of placement, age, gender, and ethnicity
- Dependent Variable
  - amount of time it takes for the child to attain his/her permanency goal



# Results

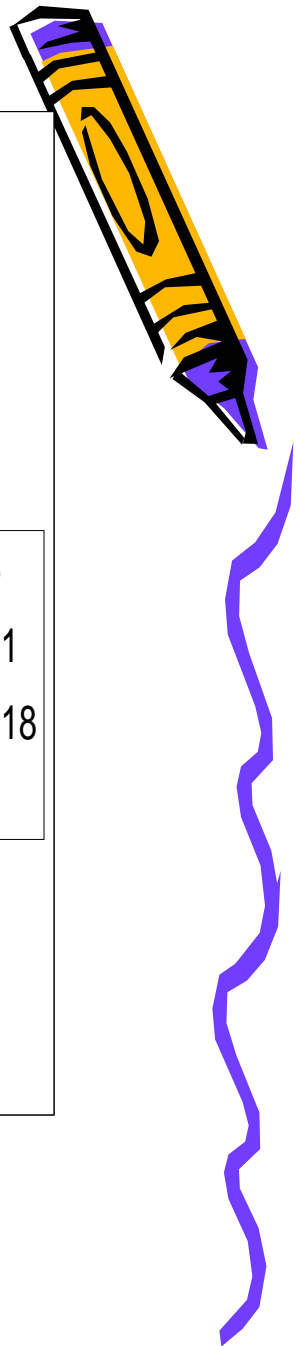
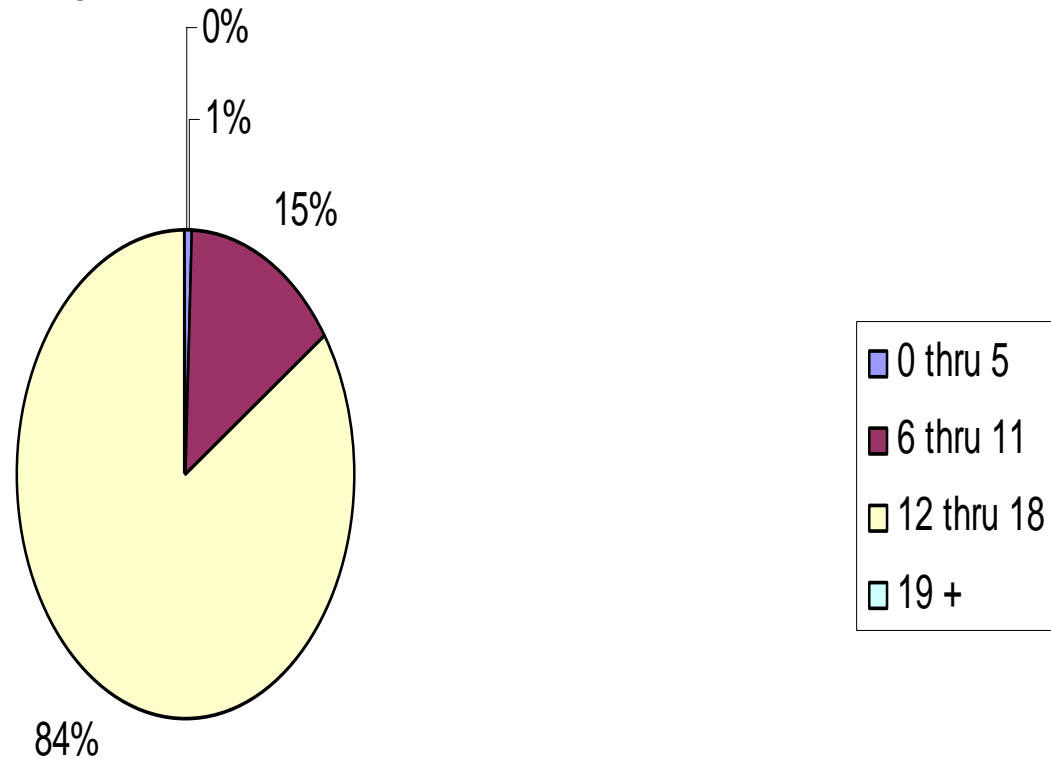
Gender of Residential Children



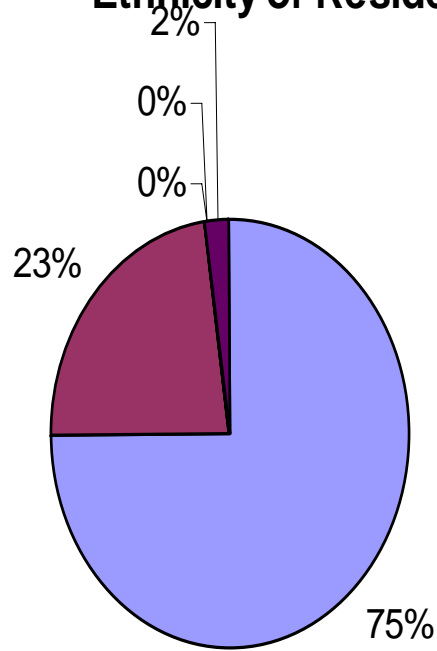
60% of subjects were male; 40% were female



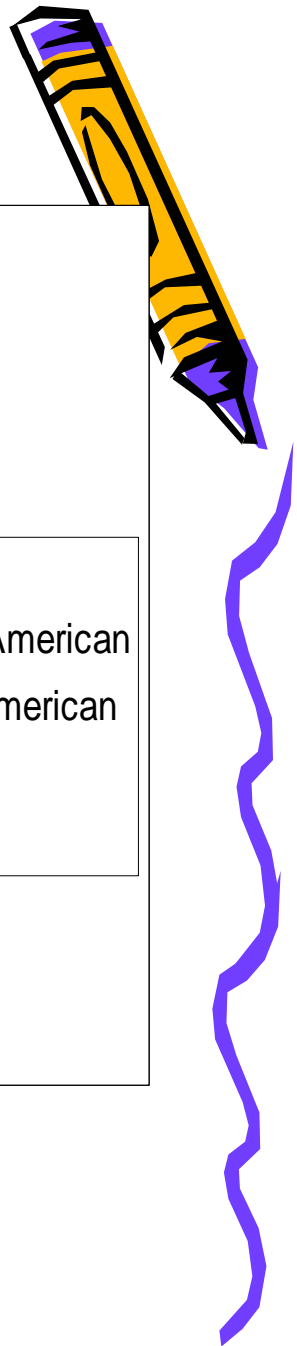
## Age Groups of Children in Residential Care



**Ethnicity of Residential Children**

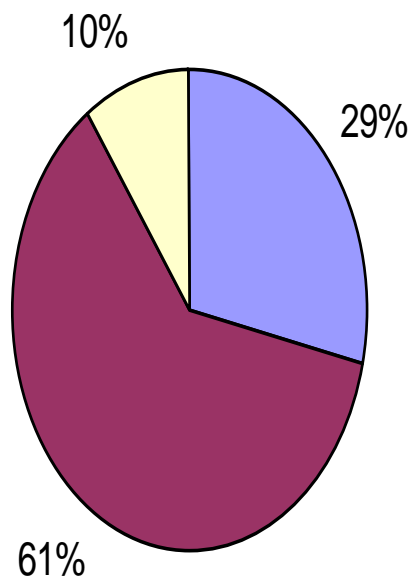


- White
- African American
- Native American
- Asian
- Other

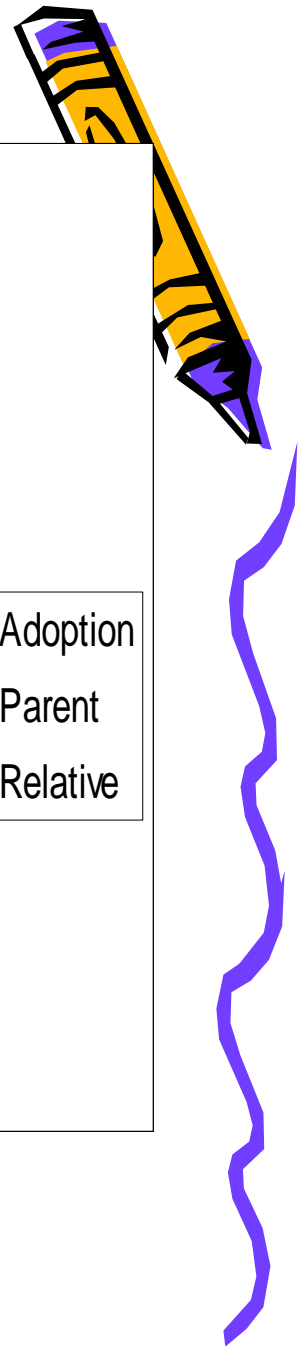




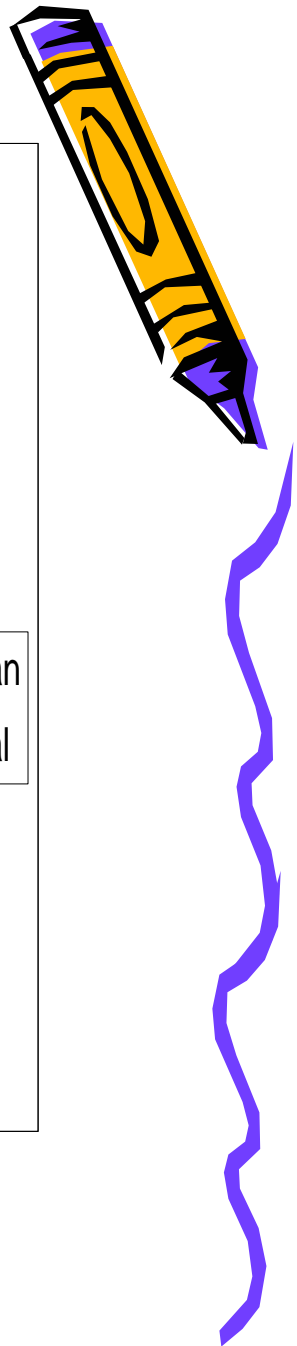
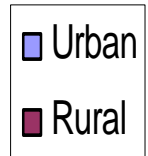
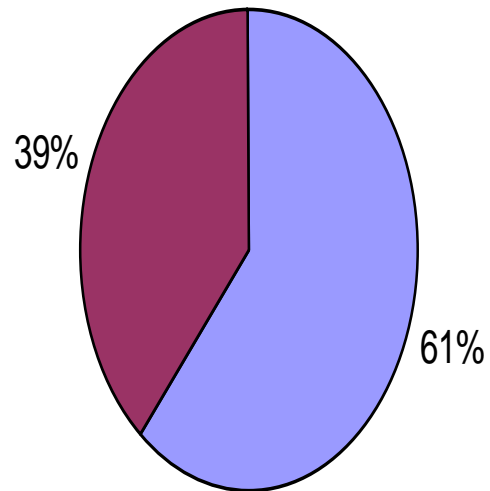
## Permanency Goals Used



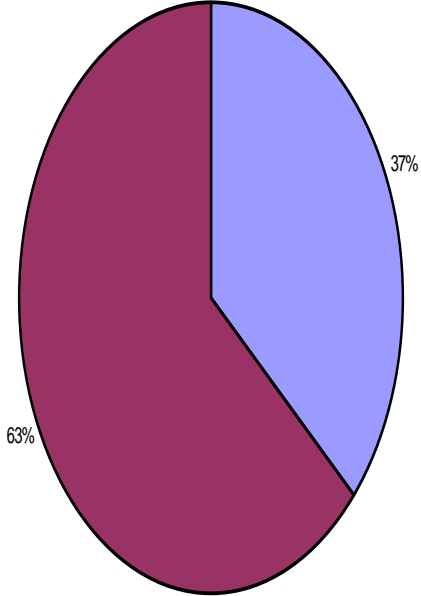
- Adoption
- Parent
- Relative



## County of Placement



Was Permanency Achieved?



- Yes
- No



Table 2 – Cross Tabulations of Achievement of Permanency and Demographics

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Variable</u>	$\chi^2$	<u>Degrees of Freedom</u>	<u>Asymp. Sig. (p value)</u>
Permanency Achieved	Male/Female	.830	1	.362
Permanency Achieved	Race	4.411	2	.110

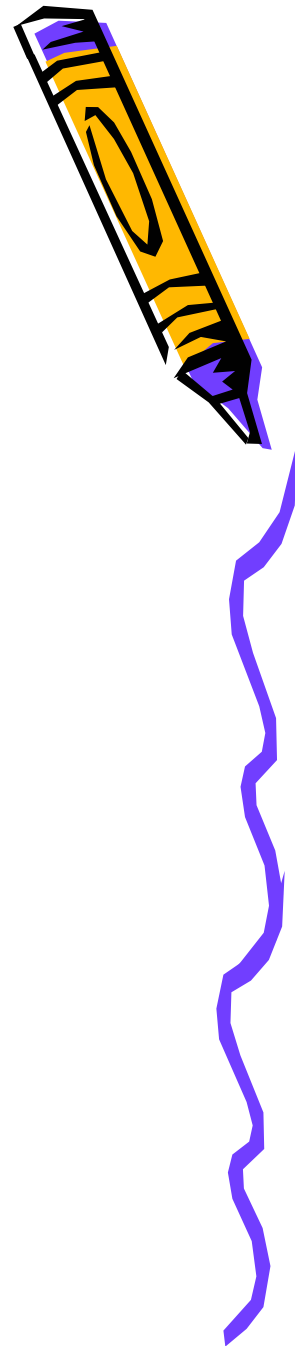
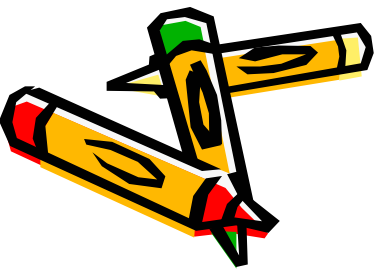
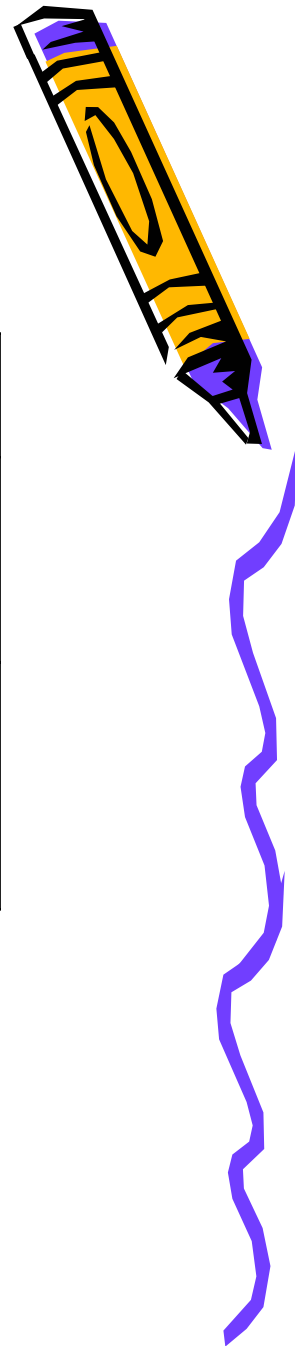


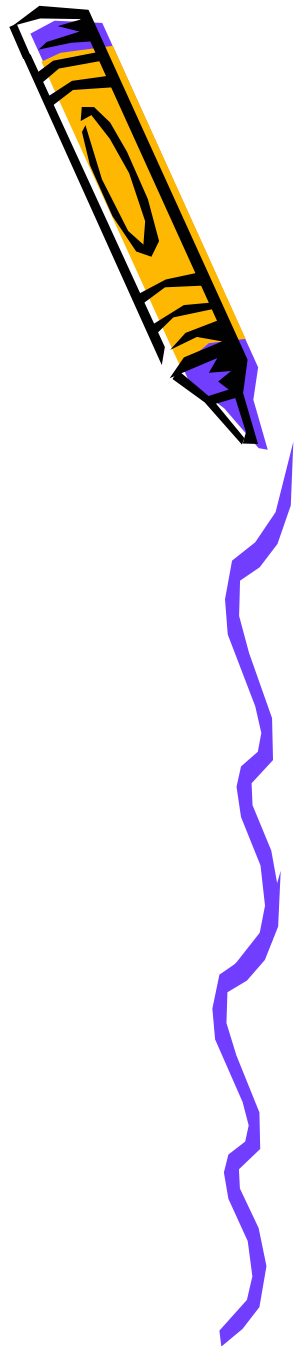
Table 3 – T-tests for Permanency Achieved  
and Length to Current Placement

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Variable</u>	<u>t value</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Sig. (p value)</u>
Age Group	Permanency Achieved	-1.786	667	.075
Urban and Rural	Length of Time to Achieve Permanency	-.790	244	.430



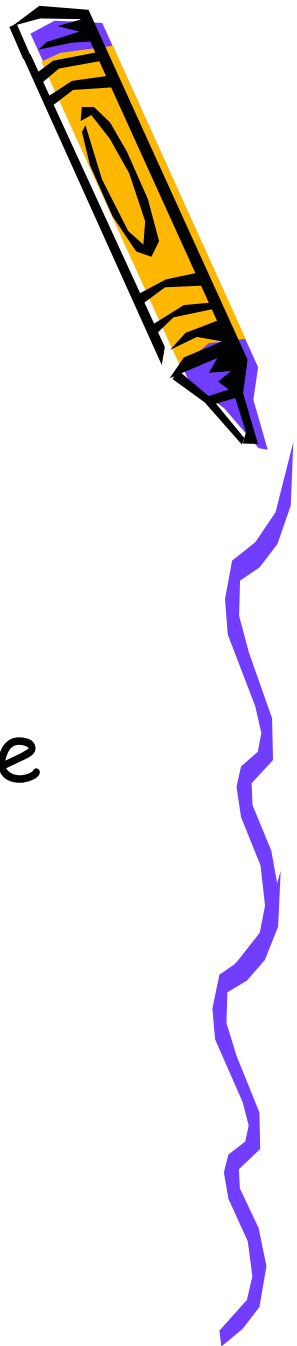
# Discussion

- Children in rural areas reach permanency at a faster rate
- No differences between gender, ethnic group, or age group
- Inconclusive findings



# Limitations

- Why do rural kids reach faster?
- Large number of kids; no way to track all- data integrity
- Not all children have a level of care
- Family History
- Point in time study
- Severity of child needs, issues



# Conclusions

- Very small knowledge/research base on permanency and residential setting
- More research needed
  - ASFA; forefront to child welfare
  - Data is there; just need more time, interested parties to analyze data

